

VZCZCXYZ0003  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #2030/01 1752202  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 242202Z JUN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9528  
INFO RHEHOND/DIR ONDCP WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//SCJ2/SCJ3/SCJ5//  
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF STATE AIR WING PATRICK AFB FL

UNCLAS BOGOTA 002030

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR INL/LP AND INL/RM  
DEPT FOR WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [SENV](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FOR MAY 2009

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Aerial Eradication program sprayed 10,895 hectares in May, putting the program on schedule to reach the calendar goal of 100,000 hectares sprayed. Due to enhanced communication and synchronization, Accion Social management agreed to remove previously established, large no-spray areas, thus opening additional work areas to aerial eradication. Colombian manual eradication efforts eradicated a total of 17,099 hectares, incurring seven casualties with five security personnel killed (17 people have died in manual eradication operations in 2009). PCHP flew 23.2 hours supporting ten medical evacuation flights that transported 25 patients. Two COLAR pilots obtained certification in advanced crew qualification positions, marking progress toward nationalization efforts. Cooperation on antinarcotics efforts between Venezuela and Colombia led to two large operations by Venezuelan armed forces in Venezuela. On May 28, Colombian and U.S. officials inaugurated NAS Bogota-funded (US Army Corps of Engineers-supervised) USD 6M rural police training center in Pijaos, Tolima. The Timbiqui indigenous community in Cauca claimed that spray operations occurred in their community on May 5 and that 40 people became ill as the result. After reviewing spray data, NAS confirmed that spray operations did not occur on this date. END SUMMARY.

-----  
AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM  
-----

¶2. (SBU) The Aerial Eradication team sprayed a total of 10,895 hectares in May, in spite of the fact that 71 percent of scheduled sorties were cancelled due to poor weather. The total hectares sprayed at each base follow: Cucuta, 586; San Jose, 4,906; and Tumaco, 5,403. This brings the calendar year total for hectares of coca sprayed to 42,264, and puts the program on schedule to reach the calendar goal of 100,000 hectares sprayed. Eradication aircraft experienced three hostile fire incidents during the month, resulting in nine impacts, bringing the total for the calendar year to ten hostile fire incidents with seventeen impacts.

¶3. (SBU) Coordination continues to improve between the aerial eradication program and the GOC's Accion Social manual eradication effort. Due to enhanced communication and synchronization, Accion Social management agreed to remove previously instituted, large no-spray areas, thus opening additional work areas to aerial eradication.

¶4. (SBU) Student attendance at the AT-802 mechanic training is not improving - the students are regularly pulled from class to attend other courses or to attend to non-training related requirements. The aerial eradication program manager, NAU Colombian National Police (CNP) liaison, and NAS ARAVI (CNP Air Service Support)

personnel are working with the ARAVI commander to ensure required attendance.

-----  
MANUAL ERADICATION PROGRAM  
-----

¶15. (SBU) Phase II of the GOC's 2009 manual eradication campaign (GME program) began in late May and will last until late July. The total eradication of coca for the month of May was 4,184 hectares - bringing the GME program's year-to-date total to 14,089 hectares. Including eradication carried out by the Colombian security forces, total coca eradication through May was 17,099 hectares. Manual eradication operations are ongoing in seven departments but will expand to additional departments as insertion of manual eradicators continues during Phase II. The majority of GMEs are working in the traditional coca growing regions of Putumayo, Antioquia, Meta and Narino.

¶16. (SBU) In May, landmine and hostile fire incidents killed five security personnel and injured two others. In one incident, four soldiers protecting GMEs were killed by a landmine in the department of Antioquia. Through May, 17 people (14 security personnel and three civilians) have died during this year's manual eradication operations. In all of 2008, 26 security personnel and civilian eradicators were killed in manual eradication operations.

¶17. (SBU) Separate from the GME program, the Colombian Army (COLAR) and the Colombian National Police (CNP) conducted manual eradication as part of their normal operations. Through May, COLAR had eradicated 2,198 hectares of coca, 37 hectares of poppy, and two hectares of marijuana; the CNP had eradicated 649 hectares of coca, three hectares of poppy and 31 hectares of marijuana; and the Navy had eradicated 163 hectares of coca.

-----  
PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER PROGRAM (PCHP)  
-----

¶18. (SBU) PCHP aircraft flew a total of 657.9 hours in May. PCHP aircraft operated from Tumaco, San Jose, Larandia, Cucuta, and Tolemaida performing air assaults and movements, reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and support missions for the Counterdrug (CD) Brigade and other vetted COLAR units. Air assaults continued to be an effective means of increasing security for aerial eradication spray operations and counternarcotics interdiction operations conducted by BACNA units of the CD Brigade. PCHP flew 23.2 hours supporting ten medical evacuation flights that transported 25 patients.

¶19. (SBU) The PCHP program provided training for the UH-60 and UH-119 aircrews. Two COLAR pilots obtained certification in advanced crew qualification positions as Standardization Instructor Pilot and Standardization Maintenance Test Pilot, respectively, marking another significant advance in the program's nationalization.

-----  
COLOMBIA NATIONAL POLICE (CNP) AIR SERVICE (ARAVI) SUPPORT  
-----

¶110. (SBU) ARAVI's USG-supported fleet flew 2,085 mission hours in May. The seven UH-60 Black Hawks flew 250 hours with an Operational Readiness (OR) rate of 68 percent. The Bell 212 fleet flew 210 mission hours with an OR rate of 64 percent; two Bell 212s still need to be inducted to the Service Life Extension Program/Rewire. The Huey II OR rate was 68 percent while flying 948 hours. Two Huey II aircraft (six percent of the fleet) are currently in reassembly after undergoing extensive structural repairs. The DC-3 fleet flew 280 hours, with an OR rate of 49 percent.

-----  
INTERDICTION  
-----

¶111. (SBU) The CNP seized 24 metric tons of cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) and cocaine base, 11.68 metric tons of marijuana, and 33 kilograms (kgs) of heroin. The CNP also destroyed 32 cocaine HCl laboratories, 161 coca base laboratories, and captured 1,319 metric tons of precursor chemicals.

¶12. (SBU) Highlights for May included the seizure of 10,800 gallons of solvent (precursor chemical) by the DIRAN (National Police Antinarcotics Division in its Spanish acronym) Villavicencio Company at a road check point near Puerto Lopez, Meta on May 2. On May 6, the DIRAN Chemical Control Group seized 1.7 metric tons of sulfuric acid and 715 kgs of chloride acid at a control point near Cali. On May 7, the Santa Marta Junglas destroyed a cocaine HCl laboratory containing ten kgs of cocaine and 567 kgs of cocaine base near San Carlos, Antioquia. On May 8, the DIRAN Chemical Control Group seized 6.94 metric tons of sulfuric acid and one ton of carbon soda at a road check point south of Cali. On May 10, the new DIRAN Northeast Zone destroyed one cocaine HCl laboratory and four base laboratories near Convencion, Norte de Santander; DIRAN destroyed over 830 kgs of cocaine. On May 10-12, the Tulua Junglas destroyed 63 coca base laboratories near Tumaco, Narino. On May 15, the Bogota Junglas participated in a joint CNP, Colombian Air Force and Colombian Army airmobile assault against the FARC 51st Front camp located 26 miles southwest of Melgar. The CNP found five FARC KIAs and nine weapons at the camp. On May 16, DIRAN seized twelve go-fast type boats in Bahia Solano, Choco. On May 17, the DIRAN Chemical Control Group captured 15.33 metric tons of precursor chemicals at a road checkpoint near Medellin, Antioquia. Also on May 17, DIRAN destroyed a cocaine HCl lab located near Puerto Nare, Antioquia. On May 25, the Santa Marta Junglas seized a criminal band arms cache containing mortar rounds and small arms ammunition near Caucasia, Antioquia. On May 27, the Bogota Junglas supported a CNP operation against the 57th Front leadership, while another Bogota Jungla element supported a CNP operation against the FARC 10 Front near Saravena, Arauca. On May 28, the Bogota Junglas captured 100 kgs of cocaine at a road checkpoint in Bogota. The Jungla Airmobile companies are providing 12-man reconnaissance and advisory elements to each of the six manual eradication sites managed by DIRAN.

¶13. (SBU) On May 12, the DIRAN Regional Intelligence (Cucuta) shared intelligence with the Venezuelan National Guard Antidrug Command leading to the destruction of a cocaine HCl laboratory in Tachira, Venezuela containing 1.5 metric tons of cocaine. On May 27, the DIRAN Regional Intelligence (Cucuta) again shared intelligence with the Venezuelan National Guard Antidrug Command leading to the destruction (by the Venezuelan National Guard) of a major cocaine laboratory also located in Tachira. This laboratory contained 222 kgs of cocaine and 3.2 metric tons of cocaine base.

¶14. (SBU) Several DIRAN courses are underway at the Antinarcotics Police Training Center in Pijaos, Tolima, including the 23-week Combat Medic Course (40 students); the eight-week Explosives and Demolitions Course (45 students); and the 18-week Jungla International Course (106 students). The Jungla International Course includes 57 Colombian students and 49 foreign students from 12 Latin American countries (Haiti, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Belize, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil). The six-week US Army 7 Special Forces Group's course "Pequeñas Unidades" began on April 27 with 45 students. This course focuses on reconnaissance, military mountaineering and 60mm mortar training.

¶15. (SBU) On May 28, the Colombian Minister of Defense Santos, Ambassador Brownfield, and Colombian National Police Director Naranjo conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate the NAS Bogota-funded (US Army Corps of Engineers-supervised) rural police training center in Pijaos, Tolima. The USD 6M project has four 104-man barracks, three 40-man classrooms, an administrative building, a parade field, a warehouse and a kitchen/dining facility.

-----  
BASE SECURITY/ROAD INTERDICTION  
-----

¶16. (SBU) Upon completion of the one-month Base Defense course in San Jose de Guaviare that graduated 42 personnel on April 3, the focus shifted to Tumaco where a six-week course will begin on June 29. This course will have 45 students from various DIRAN, EMCAR and BRACNA units.

¶17. (SBU) The parties modified the IDIQ (indefinite amount/indefinite quantity) Bastion Wall contract for the project at

San Jose de Guaviare (completed on January 15) to include the installation of three two-story bunker facilities. The La Julia project began on May 18; the Miraflores project begun in March continued through the month of May. ACS is the primary contractor for San Jose del Guaviare and La Julia, and DSS/LLC is the primary contractor for Miraflores.

¶18. (SBU) NAS NVD advisor, Carabinero and Jungla inspectors and maintenance supervisors inspected, serviced and delivered 110 mine detectors in time for the re-initiation of the manual eradication efforts. Regular inspections of NVDs continued at El Dorado, Guaymaral, Facatativa, Espinal, Pijaos, Cespo, Larandia, Santa Marta, Tulua and DITRA. The program's managers ensured that all of the 185 NVDs purchased for DICAR in February were inspected, certified, and delivered to the appropriate DICAR units.

-----  
PORT SECURITY PROGRAM (PSP)  
-----

¶19. (SBU) In May, DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) unit seized 426 kgs of cocaine at the Port of Buenaventura. The same unit reported 620 kgs to USG authorities that were seized in Panama; 10.4 kgs of cocaine at the Port of Santa Marta; 16.56 kgs of marijuana and 32.5 kgs (bulk weight) of cocaine at the Port of San Andres; 30 kgs of cocaine (bulk weight) at the airport of Palmira (Cali); 1.5 kgs of heroin, 18.8 kgs of marijuana and 1.9 kgs of cocaine at the airport of Rionegro (Medellin); and 186.26 kgs of cocaine (bulk weight), 2.6 kgs of heroin and 40 kgs of marijuana at the Bogota airport. The same unit reported 630 kgs to Mexican authorities that were seized at the Mexico City airport. Canine Units participated in five of the seizures above.

¶20. (SBU) The DIRAN polygraph unit conducted polygraph exams on 64 members of the DIRAN's Interdiction, Administrative, and Ports and Airports units and supported the Internal Control Group activities on specific cases. 43 of those tested passed the exam, 17 failed, and four had inconclusive results. ICE polygraphists tested six members of this unit - two of them passed, one failed, one was inconclusive, and two need to be reviewed by the DOD's Polygraph Institute.

-----  
COLOMBIAN ARMY COUNTERDRUG (CD) BRIGADE  
-----

¶21. (SBU) CD Brigade's Second and Third Battalions continue to directly support aerial eradication and conduct interdiction and combat operations with FOLs in Tumaco, Narino, and Cucuta Norte de Santander. In May, the battalions conducted operations against the FARC's Daniel Aldana Mobil Column, Arturo Ruiz Mobil Column and the 30 Front in Roberto Payan Narino, Lopez de Micay Narino, and La Tarra Norte de Santander. The brigade secured a total of 10,895 hectares in support of aerial eradication. During various operations, the battalions located and destroyed 359 kgs of coca paste, 11 gallons of liquid cocaine, 10 coca paste labs, six enemy camps; and seized six enemy weapons and drug caches, 5,990 gallons of liquid precursors, 1,918 kgs of solid precursors, 29 rifles, 48 hand grenades, five sub machine guns, three machine guns, one mortar, eight pistols, 5,796 rounds of ammunition, eight shotguns, 384 kgs of explosives, 2,280 meters of detonation fuse, 2,680 of detonation cord, and two FARC computers. The battalions killed four enemy combatants during operations. During combat operations, two soldiers were killed and four wounded.

-----  
INDIVIDUAL DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAM  
-----

¶22. (SBU) The Ministry of Defense's (MOD) demobilization program received more than 1,200 individuals through May 31, a decrease of approximately 15-20 percent compared to the same period in 2008. Reasons for this may be reduced total illegal group membership, possible controls or countermeasures on members to avoid escape, relative absence of a communications budget, and/or other unidentified factors. Program leadership has begun a focus group to identify areas for improvement in an attempt to jump start desertion rates. While overall rates were down, ELN (National Liberation Army

in its Spanish acronym) desertion rates increased in part due to a targeted communications strategy. Large budget shortfalls have been overcome allowing the MOD to execute contracts with local radio stations communicating the demobilization message deep into the countryside. Additionally, the MOD has restarted payments to individuals to reward them for information, to prevent illegal recruitments, and to provide psychological assistance to those who demobilize.

¶23. (SBU) More than 60 percent of the demobilized members of illegal armed groups state that their motivations for desertion are abuse by their commanders and/or pressure from military operations; looking for a new way of life and ideological differences also play into the decisions to desert. Information provided by the demobilized is still one of the best sources of intelligence available to Colombian security forces.

-----  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
-----

¶24. (SBU) In May, the interagency complaints committee received 132 new claims of alleged spray damage to legal crops and 113 cases were closed. We concluded payment to eight complainants for an approximate total of USD 15,465. Since the beginning of the program in 2001, 138 complainants have been compensated with a total of approximately USD 617,230.

¶25. (SBU) The Timbiqui indigenous community in Cauca claimed that spray operations occurred in their community on May 5 and that 40 people became ill as the result. The National Institute of Health (INS) visited the community on May 9, and examined those who were willing to undergo the medical exam with a local nurse. The nurses collected bodily fluid samples and INS sent them to a laboratory in Costa Rica for analysis; we are waiting for the results. After reviewing spray data, NAS confirmed that spray operations did not occur on this date.

¶26. (SBU) The antinarcotics police from the complaint and verification departments started training on the high resolution ADS aerial mapping camera recently installed in the NAS ARAVI-supported C-208 Caravan. This camera will be used for verification and detection missions, and to verify crop damage complaints. The use of this camera should decrease the resources and time devoted to conducting verification missions, and increase the time to verify crop damages allegedly caused by spray operations.

BROWNFIELD